

Remarks

Claims 1-24 are pending in the application. Claims 1-9 are rejected, claims 10-12 are objected to, claims 13-20 are withdrawn, and claims 21-24 are allowed. By this paper, claims 1 and 11 are amended, and claim 10 is canceled. Based on the following, consideration of the amended claims, and reconsideration of the remaining claims, are requested.

Specification

By this paper, the specification is amended at paragraphs 0038 and 0039 to update the references to patent applications which were incorporated by reference. Each of these applications has now published, and the specification has been amended to identify these applications by their respective publication numbers.

Claim Rejections—35 U.S.C. § 103

The Examiner rejected claims 1-3 and 5-7 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,389,855 (Ueda et al.) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,077,982 (Shaffer, Jr.). Claim 4 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ueda et al. in view of Shaffer, Jr. as applied to claim 1, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,481,230 (Kimishima et al.). Claims 8 and 9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ueda et al. in view of Shaffer, Jr. as applied to claim 7, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,289,692 (Campbell et al.).

By this paper, claim 1 is amended to more particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter of the invention. Specifically, amended claim 1 includes all of the limitations of claim 10, which was accordingly canceled. As explained below, the Examiner objected to claim 10, and since there were no intervening claims, amended claim 1 is believed to be allowable. Amended claim 1 is the base claim for claims 2-9. Each of these dependent claims contains all of the limitations of amended claim 1, as well as additional limitations

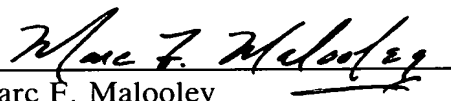
which further distinguish it from the cited references. Therefore, claims 2-9 are also believed to be allowable.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner objected to claims 10-12 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but indicated that each would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. As explained above, claim 10 depended directly from claim 1, which was amended to include all of the limitations of claim 10. Because claim 10 was canceled, claim 11 was amended to depend directly from amended claim 1. Amended claim 1 is the base claim for claims 11 and 12, which are believed to be allowable. Applicant thanks the Examiner for allowance of claims 21-24, and requests allowance of each of the remaining claims.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark G. Smith

By 
Marc F. Malooley
Reg. No. 50,624
Attorney/Agent for Applicant

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BROOKS KUSHMAN P.C.
1000 Town Center, 22nd Floor
Southfield, MI 48075-1238
Phone: 248-358-4400
Fax: 248-358-3351